

February 6, 2018

The Honorable Klint Kesto
Chairman, Law and Justice Committee
Anderson House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48933

Representative Kesto,

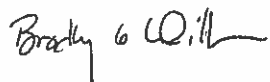
We write today on behalf of our members in support of House Bills 5377, 5450, 5451 and 5452; needed reforms that will help move Michigan towards being smarter on crime, and softer on taxpayers. Over a decade ago the Detroit Regional Chamber and the Grand Rapids Chamber both correctly identified Corrections as an area that is strongly driving state budget decisions, and have worked together in support of solutions like this one. Our organizations also share a laser focus on the talent pipeline in Michigan, and we strive to ensure that our members have access to qualified individuals. Formerly incarcerated individuals offer an opportunity to meet the talent needs across the state.

We have been gratified to see recent bipartisan efforts to reform Michigan's corrections system. Considering Michigan appropriates nearly 20% of our state budget on corrections, these continued solutions have been strongly welcomed. Of the two billion Michigan taxpayers spend annually on corrections, millions are spent on the continued incarceration of parole-eligible low-risk prisoners. These people can safely join the workforce and fill talent gaps for in demand jobs, and tax dollars would be better spent on roads, schools, job training, and other components of a successful business climate.

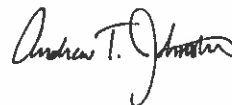
Michigan's large prison population is partially driven by the fact that on average, prisoners in Michigan serve far longer terms than those in other states. One reason is that our parole board keeps too many people locked up beyond the time they are first eligible for release. House Bill 5377 simply defines those "objective and compelling reasons" that the parole board is already required to use to deny parole. *The savings from this reform could be invested in community-based programs for parolees, mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and many other services that provide value to our members and the state overall.*

Our members talk a lot about making government smarter and more efficient. This reform is an opportunity to do just that.

Sincerely,



Brad Williams
Vice President, Government Relations
Detroit Regional Chamber



Andy Johnston
Vice President, Government Relations
Grand Rapids Chamber

CC: Members of the Law and Justice Committee